CHAPTER XIV.

"No longer now the wing'd inhabitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,
Flee from the form of man; but gather round,
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.
All things are void of terror: man has lost
His terrible prerogative, and stands
An equal amidst equals: happiness
And science dawn, tho' late, upon the earth."

SHELLEY.

WHILE Hampden and myself were thus engaged in the neighbourhood of Strathfieldsay, Charles Bertrand had not been idle among his religious friends. So amiable and excellent was his character, that his attendance was courted at the committees of all the Societies formed for the dissemination of Christian knowledge. He was far more useful in imparting a portion of that spirit by which he himself was actuated, than in promoting the particular and exclusive object of each Society, and which was, in general, held virtually, if not avowedly, paramount to the grand principle by which they all professed to be governed, viz. "Peace on earth, and good-

will towards men." Although each Society was composed of Christians of various denominations, yet there was generally a peculiar creed professed by the majority of each, and a subscription to which secured greater attention than the most sincere devotion to the cause of vital religion. Bertrand's suggestions, through his want of sympathy with the exclusiveness of every sect, were too often regarded with suspicion, and overruled; but the mildness of his disposition, his intelligence, and gentlemanly deportment, commanded the esteem and admiration of all. If he failed to carry his measures, the effect of his persuasive language was, in some degree, to lower their sectarian, and improve their better feelings.

It was a favourite object with Bertrand, at these meetings, to impress them with the successful example of the Moravian missionaries, who, before they attempted to instruct the savage tribes in any articles of faith, ameliorated their condition by imparting to them the comforts, and teaching the arts, of civilization. He also reminded them of the success of the Jesuits in Paraguay*:—but these schemes they deemed visionary. Some

* While Father Labat was at Rome, Father Tamburini, at that time General of the Jesuits, asked him several questions relating to the progress of Christianity in America: he gave very unsatisfactory replies, and concluded by saying, "that, in order to make the Americans *Christians*, it was previously necessary to make them *men*."

of them would say, "We withhold our assistance in carrying into practice the principles of united interests, from an apprehension that the existing state of society is a dispensation of Providence, not to be altered by human exertion. This life is a probationary state, where adversity and prosperity afford a test of obedience in the exercise or neglect of the respective virtues of resignation to the Divine will, and of benevolence to our fellow-creatures: wars and tumults, private animosities and misery, have always prevailed, and are found even in sacred history*." To which Charles would reply, "It is surely our duty to obey the commands of the Deity, rather than to ascribe to his laws the imperfections of human institutions. The same volume that contains the history of man's departure from a state of innocence, has also announced his restoration to the Divine favour, through the mediation of his Redeemer, and instructed us in the conditions which can alone entitle us to this bright inheritance—'by doing the will of our Father who is in heaven.' We are not to reject the advice of a physician who prescribes a regimen that prevents

* "Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because deliver'd down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing."—COWPER.

bodily disease, because it may supersede the use of those healing medicines which a beneficent Creator has sent to our relief. Christianity not only remedies evils resulting from a disordered state of society, but enables us to lay the foundation of a community, in which a recurrence of these evils may be prevented,—for these plans are in fact the offspring of religion; and unless legislators, in exercising the functions of their office, can be justified in dispensing with Christian motives, or a Government which is professedly a union of church and state is to forget its sacred duties,—such political regulations will be adopted for the destitute, as can best support the most important interests of mankind. Survey society," he would sometimes add, (exhibiting a list of virtues and vices,) "in its present form, and how many instances do we behold of the sacrifice of right principles in compliance with its rules?

Present society virtually encourages	*Religion enjoins*
Avarice	Moderation.
Ebriety	Temperance.
Revenge	Forgiveness of injuries.
Ambition	Contentment.
Pride	Humility.
Envy	Charity.
Error	Truth.
Hypocrisy	Sincerity.
Selfishness	Benevolence.
War	Peace.

"These are but a few in the long catalogue of inconsistencies and contradictions, in which we are involved between our religious professions and the feelings naturally arising out of our present system. There is not a single virtue inculcated by religion, the practice of which is not greatly promoted by the judicious mode of instruction, and the œconomical principles of friendly communities. In observing the various forms which vice assumes, how obvious is the truth, that, as we descend in the scale of mental acquirements, and in the gradations of life, the enormity of crime increases; and that those deeds of barbarity, which have of late so frequently stained the columns of our journals, have been perpetrated by those only who are most ignorant and destitute! The middle and higher classes would not be exempt from crimes no less atrocious, if they were not to be attributed chiefly to external causes; and until education and the circumstances of society (equally the province of religion to direct,) shall be made to conspire to one end, mankind at large will not, to any practical purpose, be convinced that their duty and their happiness are the same. In possession of the accumulated stores of ancient wisdom, the discoveries of modern science, and aided by the divine illuminations of the Gospel, why, it may be asked, have we hitherto failed in

erecting a lasting fabric of human happiness? Must we yield to those who maintain that there is an invincible depravity in human nature which will for ever mock the efforts of moral, religious, and political philosophy? No: for it can be proved, that in a misapplication alone of these valuable materials is to be found the source of all our perplexities. If mankind, instead of fashioning Christianity to suit their varying purposes, had permitted it to maintain its paramount importance in the councils of nations, they would have perceived, that to individualize man was to devote him to almost all the vices which Christianity was sent to extirpate."—Such were the arguments he was accustomed to use.

One morning when Bertrand attended a committee of the Missionary Society, a member produced a letter which he had received from Liverpool, announcing the arrival of a very extraordinary personage by a vessel from Lima; no less than a missionary from a people long since considered extinct, and who had come over for the purpose of proclaiming to the British empire the superior efficacy of his religion. The letter was treated by the committee with ridicule, and attributed to some infidel who wished to satirize their proceedings. The gentleman to whom the letter was addressed entertained a different opinion, and was convinced, from the respectability of his

correspondent, that there was some truth in the report. Charles also considered it an idle rumour; but upon visiting the Society on the following week, he found another letter had been received, fully confirming the intelligence; and adding, that the missionary would proceed to London in a few days. The curiosity of Charles was now awakened; and, after some further inquiry, he requested the gentleman, who had received the information, to apprise him of his arrival in town. In a week he was introduced at the committee, where Charles happened to be present. His name was Vela. He was a young man, not exceeding twenty-five years, of middle stature, and finely proportioned: his eyes were not particularly animated; his complexion was dark: but his countenance, altogether, expressed mildness, and the most open ingenuousness. Having resided some time at Lima, he had studied the manners and customs of England. He was so assailed by a variety of questions, that he begged, as a favour, that one of the company would read a brief account of himself, and of the circumstances that brought him to England. This account he had drawn up partly before he left his country, and had completed it during his voyage.—The meeting requested their secretary to read the account, which was as follows.

"I am descended from the ancient Incas of

Peru. After the treacherous Pizarro had imprisoned and cruelly put to death our king Atahualpa, the kingdom of Peru was torn by dissensions, the government destroyed, and no vestige of order remained. The people, accustomed to look up with reverence to their kings, and happy under their paternal sway, could neither submit patiently to the yoke of the Spaniards, nor had they sufficient courage to resist. Their only safety was in flight. Nearly all the Children of the Sun were destroyed. One branch only of the imperial family was recognised by a small band of Peruvians by his dress, which he had contrived to conceal during their retreat to the mountains. His name was Pezeula. Nothing could exceed the joy with which the people hailed him, as if preserved by the interposition of the Great Spirit. He collected together his followers, about two hundred in number, and desired them to assemble on an eminence which he pointed out, on the following morning, before the break of day. They met him accordingly, and raised a temporary altar to the sun. As that glorious luminary emerged from the horizon, he offered up an oblation of fruits and flowers; his people, in reverential posture, observing a profound silence, while, with mingled feelings of gratitude for their own deliverance, and deep

regret for the miseries of his country, the Inca thus invoked their deity.

"'Hail! parent of life and light, the source of all good, the sublime emblem of unbounded power and beneficence! To thee, beneath the vaulted canopy of this thy universal temple, we humbly offer up our praises and thanksgivings; upon thy altar we present the blooming flowers tinted by thy rays, and the choicest fruits matured by thy genial warmth. The birds of the air, in sweet harmony, testify their joy at thy approach, and at thy presence all nature revives. Thou givest verdure to the earth, and lustre to the morning dew. Thou hast alike imparted vigour to the mountain ash, and fertility to the tender grass in the boundless prairy. Oh! may'st thou teach us to imitate thy universal beneficence, that the warmth of our hearts, cherished and animated by thy divine rays, may know no bounds; and that we may so love our enemies, as to convert them into friends! Teach us to obey the heavenly mandates of Manco Capac; to walk in his unerring path, and, finally, reach that blessed country, where the Spaniard shall cease to torment, where forests abound in game, and where famine is unknown!'

"The Inca with his little band, after secreting themselves during the day in the most unfre-

quented parts of the mountain, descended as the shades of evening came on, and, by the aid of the most experienced guides, they travelled with much speed during the night in a south-easterly direction, when they reached an extended plain or prairy. Here they struck far out of the beaten track, and travelled for twenty-five days, when they arrived at the foot of one of the mountains which extend in an immense chain from Chimbirano to the Andes. The passage over this mountain was most arduous, and had nearly proved fatal to the whole party. The ascent was extremely difficult and laborious. When they had arrived about half way up the mountain, a slight rain came on, accompanied with violent wind, and dense clouds collecting rapidly obscured their path. This was followed by sleet or ice, falling so heavily as to oppress them much and retard their progress; while the vivid flashes of lightning, the rolling thunder, and the screams of the condor completed the horrors of the scene. The courage and fortitude of the Inca seemed to rise with their difficulties:—wherever there was one sinking under the fatigue, there was he to be found cheering and supporting him. A heavy fall of snow succeeded, accompanied with cold so intense, as to enfeeble their exertions and benumb their joints. Many fell, unable to proceed; but

the Inca resolved, that, if possible to save him, not a single individual should be deserted. Never was witnessed such a scene of misery on the one hand, and of self-devotion on the other. Animated by the divine example of the Inca, whose conduct upon this arduous occasion endeared him more strongly to his people, the fall of one individual was a signal for others to forget their own sufferings in striving to uphold their helpless companion. Never were greater hardships endured, or more fortitude displayed. Not a murmur of complaint was to be heard. They traversed the mountain as one family, united to each other and to their chief by the firmest bonds of affection and reverence.

"When the storm had passed over, they found, notwithstanding all their solicitude and care, that eleven of their number had perished. It was supposed that they had fallen without being perceived, or had unconsciously wandered from the main body. The band halted for two days at the foot of the mountain to refresh themselves; but their respite from difficulty was short, for, after having traversed for three days an extensive plain, they entered, under a burning sun, upon ground so swampy, that it was with the utmost exertion they could advance: three of the company were attacked with fever, and died. For a week their progress was impeded by the marshes; after which

they got upon dry ground, with a fertile and extensive prairy before them bounded by mountains, towards which the Inca proposed bending their course. Before they reached the chain of mountains, the country improved considerably; the surface was undulating, abounding in small woods, and watered by several streams. Here the Peruvians were desirous of remaining; but the Inca suggested that it was not sufficiently secluded for his design, and proposed ascending a small hill just within sight, connecting two mountains, to survey the country beyond.

"In two days they reached the spot, and, the ascent being easy, they soon gained the summit, from whence they beheld on the other side one of the most beautiful valleys that can be imagined. It was of an oval form, and about twelve miles in circumference, surrounded by small mountains and hills, with an opening on the north and south, through which a river passed, winding through the valley. There was a remarkable variety of scenery on the hills and mountains; some of the lesser hills presenting a beautiful verdure even to their summits; others were covered with rock projecting through the luxuriant foliage of trees and shrubs; while on others were seen forests of dwarf trees, with so little underwood as to present agreeable walks. From some of the mountains descended cascades, displaying

their rainbow hues, and giving animation to the scene. A few small birds poured forth the sweetest melody, and others delighted the eye with their crimson and golden plumage glittering in the sun. The little humming-bird, scarcely bigger than a butterfly, was skipping from spray to spray. The silence of this enchanting scene was interrupted only by the gurgling of a brook issuing from the foot of the hill from which they were descending, the falling of the more distant mountain streams, and the harmony of birds. The valley was covered with a verdure refreshing to the eye. On the brow of the hill the company pitched their tents; and on the following morning, after they had assembled and paid their adoration to the sun, the Inca addressed them as follows:—

"'After our long and harassing journey, we have been conducted by the Good Spirit to a spot apparently abounding in every natural advantage for our future abode, and embellished with scenery of surpassing beauty. On that rising ground, fronting the east, we will erect the temple of the Sun. It shall be surrounded with plantations, and approached by avenues lined with flowers. The spot shall be kept sacred, as well as a bridge to approach, which can be thrown over the river immediately in front. The river being narrow, other bridges may be constructed for general use.

Our habitations shall be placed chiefly on the western side, which is better adapted to our purpose from being more open, so that the temple will be conspicuous to all. The laws and institutions handed down by the Children of the Sun, having secured happiness to all before they were overthrown by the Christian barbarians from a distant country, shall be held inviolate, with the exception of some trifling ceremonies which experience has proved to be inconvenient to retain. You have seen with what insatiate desire the Christians amassed gold, and with what remorseless cruelty they deprived our lamented Atahualpa of life for the purpose of plundering his treasures. Let us, then, dispense with the use of gold and silver, and esteem no metal precious but such as ministers to our convenience. Warned by the examples of the jealous and unhappy Spaniards, let us banish every inordinate desire. Our labours will be lightened by the fertility of the soil, but still more by that mutual aid which will convert irksome toil into agreeable employment. Happy in the supply of our simple wants, this peaceful retreat will not be disturbed by rude invaders when our means of enjoyment are such as they know not how to appreciate and never could take from us,—when they found that we valued truth and virtue, and the altars of our forefathers, far above silver and gold.'

"The Inca, by following up these views, secured the attachment of his people, who for three centuries have continued faithful to his successors. Their numbers have increased considerably; but, as yet, it has not been found necessary to erect any dwellings beyond the valley, although we draw some of our resources from the neighbouring prairies. The unfavourable and indelible impression which the invasions of the Spaniards created, had induced the Incas to be extremely jealous of any foreign communication; but within the last two generations they have obtained, with great secrecy, for their private perusal, many European works of esteem. These they had been led to inquire for chiefly in consequence of the great reputation acquired by the Jesuits in Paraguay, and which induced an opinion that the character of all Europeans was not equally ferocious, and that as great a difference might be found among them as existed between the Peruvians and Mexicans. They have in consequence, with great caution, but without altering their general principles, adopted many improvements; and our valley is highly beautified.—I am the youngest of three sons of the present Inca, who exceeds all his predecessors in the desire of cultivating the minds of his people, and is endeavouring to derive all the advantages of civilization, without any of those evils which render the term a mis-

nomer. He has accordingly sent my brother and myself in different directions, according to our choice, to collect information, and to impart a knowledge of our own principles wherever they were required. I bent my course towards Lima, where I had not arrived many days when I accidentally fell in with a missionary from England, who displayed an extraordinary zeal in propagating a knowledge of the Christian religion, and who, finding my education superior to the natives in that part of South America, redoubled his efforts to bring me over to the faithful. He informed me that he belonged to a peculiar sect of Christians called Baptists, who objected to the baptizing young children, and deferred the ceremony until they had arrived at the age of puberty;—but I could not understand its utility. He was particularly inquisitive as to the country whence I came, and the character of the people among whom I dwelt; but I resisted his importunities, for the Inca had strictly enjoined his sons not to divulge the place of their retreat before they had crossed the seas. The missionary first began by teaching me the English language. With close application, and by frequenting the society he introduced me to, I was soon enabled to read your most popular works. He urged upon my attention the doctrines of his church; but when I contrasted the conduct of

the English with that of the Children of the Sun, and remarked upon the superior happiness enjoyed by the latter, I felt in my turn an anxious desire to impart to them the admirable precepts of our Incas. The missionary told me I was not to judge of his religion by the conduct of the people at Lima, for they came chiefly in pursuit of riches; but that if I would visit England, I should find those whose characters and professions agreed, and would command admiration. I saw it was absolutely necessary to acquire great proficiency in the language, and I continued some time with the missionary, whose own conduct was most exemplary. After I had quitted his house, I spent several months in the different towns in the neighbourhood of Lima, and obtained access to several private collections of English books, the existence of which was generally known. At Lima and the adjacent countries I dwelt about twelve months. I promised him I would go to England, at the same time declaring my intention of making proselytes. The conduct of the people who navigated the vessel, as well as that of the inhabitants where we landed, was no better than at Lima; and I have endeavoured to persuade many that the religion of the Incas was the most efficacious*, divested as it now is of any mysteries."

* Laloubere, envoy from Louis XIV. to Siam, says, in the account which he gives of his mission, "The Asiatics laugh

After this interesting narrative was read, various were the questions put to Vela by the company; and, as near as I can recollect Bertrand's report of the questions and answers, they were as follows:—

Q.—Have you no contention for larger portions of food, and sometimes of clothing?

Vela.—The stores being at all times amply supplied, private property in such things would be a useless incumbrance. Articles of ingenuity, —such as cabinets, paintings, and other works of art made in those hours in which each individual is not called upon to attend to any public duties, —are private property; but even these are generally deposited in the museum or public rooms, as there is no pleasure so great as that of contributing to the general happiness.

Q.—Do you not find an unwillingness to work without the stimulus of individual gain, or the desire of personal distinction? for it appears to us, that the desire of exclusive possession, or of superiority, is absolutely necessary to overcome the natural love of indolence.

Vela.—Indolence may be natural to man in the savage state, as it was with the natives of

us to scorn, when we boast to them of the excellence of the Christian religion as contributing to the happiness of states. They ask, on reading our histories, how is it possible that our religion should be so humane, while we wage war ten times more frequently than they do?"

South America at the period of the invasion of Cortes and Pizarro; but the natural character of civilized man is that of activity and enterprise. European society, wretchedly as it appears to be constituted, and hardly to be called civilized, still produces some men of active benevolence and scientific research.

Q.—But they have been stimulated by the hope of individual reward.

Vela.—I am not sufficiently acquainted with European biography to refer to the particular causes of exertion in those individuals who have been distinguished for talent, learning, or extraordinary benevolence here; but so far as I have been able to remark, they appear to be exceptions to the general character of society; whereas in our communities the more rare exceptions are on the side of ignorance, which is only found in cases of natural imbecility. Active philosophical research and kindliness of disposition are the general characteristics; and these, so far from deriving support from competition, or a struggle to excel, would be impeded by any spirit of rivalry. By a judicious culture of the youthful mind, all the branches of natural philosophy present objects of exciting curiosity, which is inflamed by acquisition, and encouraged by the facilities and sympathies offered in such pursuits. Our groves, gardens, and museums,

abound with specimens of natural philosophy; and the most complete scientific apparatus of every description is always at hand. We know of no stimulus to exertion equal to the desire of knowledge and the pleasures of benevolence. Those principles of morals and of social union most conducive to the general happiness, are esteemed the most valuable knowledge of all, because they lead to the attainment of whatever is truly estimable. Hence arises a love of order and of justice, in the preservation of which, each individual perceives that he is benefited, because his taste and feelings are gratified, while his heart responds to the surrounding expression of mutual regard*. I am, however, rather surprised that any doubt should exist on this subject, as I have been informed there are establishments in North America formed upon a principle of united interests, and the success of which is well authenticated: I allude to the Shakers, Harmonists, and some Moravian communities.

Q.—But those societies are held together by some peculiar religious notions. They are mere fanatics.

Vela.—I should conceive that they are indebted

* "Man, like the generous vine, supported lives;
The strength he gains is from th' embrace he gives.
Thus God and Nature link'd the general chain,
And bade self-love and social be the same."—POPE.

for the harmony of their associations to the institutions regarding property, rather than to any extravagant opinions on the subject of religion. To ascribe the consequences of good laws to those very imperfections which prevent them from becoming still more beneficial, appears to me a great error. It is not in consequence of fanaticism, but in spite of it, that just and equitable institutions prevent contention; and if, instead of a pertinacious adherence to dogmas, they had permitted an unrestrained exercise of the reasoning powers, they would have reaped all the fruits that are to be derived from the principle of enlightened union.

Q.—The success of such institutions, in small communities, affords no ground of presumption in their favour when applied to the affairs of a great nation.

Vela.—If happiness be the object of all human exertion, and it can be found with greater certainty in small communities,—this truth once known, what can prevent all mankind from resolving themselves into small communities? To revert to an observation regarding the force of religious opinions as a bond of union, I may remark, with regard to our society, that the progress of knowledge long since infused a doubt into the minds of the people as to the peculiar claims of the Incas to a divine origin. This

doubt was for some time entertained by a few of the most intelligent, but now it has become general.

Bertrand.—Did you find no inconvenience from the disbelief of the divine commission of the Incas?

Vela.—None whatever, after experience of the excellence of the laws had secured obedience. It is very generally believed that the claims of Manco Capac and Mama Ocollo to be considered Children of the Sun were unfounded, but assumed by him to exact submission to laws, the value of which could not otherwise be duly estimated by the people. Moral science is now, like all the other sciences, derived from experience*. When scepticism first appeared, the Incas were somewhat alarmed,—not so much from the dread of losing power, as for the security of their institutions, for the good of the people was at all times their ruling passion. They soon, however, discovered that a conviction of the truth

* "Le système de conduite dont les hommes ont besoin a toujours existé; il ne faut pas le montrer, pour que son évidence soit aperçue; l'être intelligent n'a qu'à rentrer en lui-même, imposer silence à ses passions, ecarter ses propres illusions, chercher de bonne-foi la vérité, étudier les rapports, les devoirs et les droits d'un être qui sent, qui pense, qui vit en société: pour le montrer aux autres, il ne faut que lever le bandeau que le prejugé avait mis sur leurs yeux, il ne s'agit que de dissiper les nuages du mensonge pour qu'ils voient la vérité."—DUMARSAIS.

and equity of their institutions was a better foundation in the hearts and understandings of the people, than any traditionary opinions that would not stand the test of scrutiny. All the laws are still held sacred, as being founded in truth, which must always be an emanation from the Deity.

Bertrand.—You still pay adoration to the rising sun?

Vela.—The sun is regarded as the most expressive symbol of the Deity; and the ancient ceremonies are observed with the interesting addition of vocal and instrumental music, which was introduced about fifty years since. Nothing can be conceived more sublime than the effect produced at sun-rise, if the weather be propitious. Ere the dawn of day, the Inca orders the bugle to be sounded, and it is heard throughout the spacious valley. The Peruvians instantly assemble in groups, consisting of several hundred each, in different stations. When the first faint streaks of light appear, the softest music commences. This is followed by the singing of the different assemblages in succession, according to signals of various-coloured flags. Shortly before the sun emerges, an appropriate prayer is uttered by the Children of the Sun at the head of each assemblage, the people in reverential posture observing a profound silence, until the sun's disc appears to touch the horizon, when a loud burst of music,

accompanied by all the voices in full chorus, reverberates through the valley, and seems to fill the whole visible vault of heaven with rejoicing.

The assurances which Bertrand received of the high opinion in which Vela had been held during his residence among the English in South America, together with his interesting narrative and no less interesting appearance, induced him to request his company to dinner on the following day at his apartments in St. James's Street. His friend the merchant having a prior engagement, Charles undertook to call for him in the morning, and conduct him back to his hotel at night.